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of Afghans into Europe pg 2



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Thursday, January 13, 2011

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Obama backs Hariri as Lebanon plunges into turmoil

WASHINGTON (AFP) - US President Barack Obama threw his full support behind embattled Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri yesterday as Hezbollah toppled his unity government during a White House visit.

Minutes after Obama and Hariri posed for photographers in the Oval Office, the Shiite militant group and its allies resigned from the cabinet over a UN probe into the assassination of Hariri's father, the former premier.

Tri-party Meetings on Labor Law changes off to good start

On Tuesday afternoon, the tri-party (three parties) group met once more with Minister of Labor, Otmar Oduber, to continue their discussions of the proposed labor law changes.



See coverage on page 3

Governor Refunjol receives important visit from dignitaries

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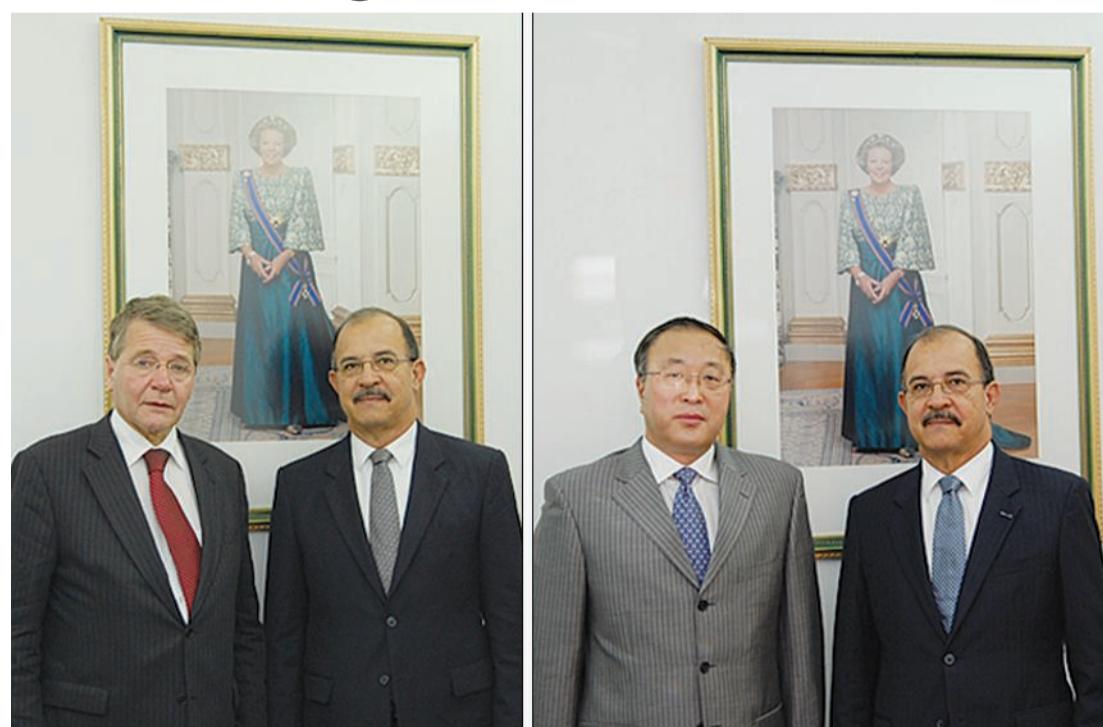
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Recently, Aruba Governor Fredis Refunjol received two courtesy visits. The first visit was from Jan Pieter Hendrik "Piet Hein" Donner, Dutch politician of the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA). He is the Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations in the Cabinet Rutte since October 14, 2010. This is Minister Donner's first work visit to Aruba. Afterwards Governor Refunjol received a visit from Mr. Jun Zhang, Chinese Ambassador to the Netherlands. Photos show Governor Refunjol with the two dignitaries.

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TUESDAY AND FRIDAY: LIVE MUSIC

Italy: Gang smuggled hundreds of Afghans into Europe

ROME, Italy (AFP) - Italian police said yesterday they had arrested 26 suspected members of a gang operating in Rome Internet cafes that smuggled hundreds of Afghans into Europe including possible Islamist militants.

Two more suspects had been taken into custody in France and Germany.

"Some of those being investigated are suspected of involvement in international terrorism," Piero Saviotti, a prosecutor in Rome, told reporters.

The gang was made up mainly of Afghans, Kurds and Pakistanis and used the hawala money transfer system popular in the Middle East and North Africa.

Up to 200 Afghans including some 40 minors were brought into Italy and on to

Death toll from floods near Rio rises to 139



Children look at residents evacuating a dog on a kayak at a flooded area in downtown Franco da Rocha, some 35 kilometers west of Sao Paulo (AFP PHOTO)

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (AFP) - The death toll from floods and mudslides near Rio de Janeiro has risen to at least 139, local authorities said.

The revised toll for the Rio

region, coupled with 13 dead counted in Sao Paulo on Monday and Tuesday, means 152 people have died in southeast Brazil this week from heavier-than-usual rains.

"These are the figures the civil defense (authorities) gave us. As they go along they are reaching new areas with the fire brigade," a spokeswoman from the Rio mayor's office told AFP.

The federal government of President Dilma Rousseff has freed up 420 million dollars in emergency aid to help the region, the state news agency Agencia Brasil said.

Heavy rains common during Brazil's summer wet season were intensified this week by a cold front which doubled the usual precipitation.

15,273 killed in Mexico drug violence in 2010

MEXICO CITY, Mexico (AFP) - A total of 15,273 people were killed in violence linked to organized crime in Mexico in 2010, the most deadly year yet since President Felipe Calderon launched a crackdown on drug gangs, a government spokesman said yesterday.

"The highest quantity of murders, 15,273, was recorded in 2010," security spokesman Alejandro Poire told a meeting with citizens' defense groups on national security.

Poire said around half of the killings had been in three northern states, Chihuahua, Tamaulipas and Sinaloa, and

that the murder rate had slightly reduced toward the end of the year.

He said 73 of 2,430 municipalities were affected by the violence raging between criminal gangs and also with security forces across the country.

The figure for 2010 was almost half the last official figure for the total killed since Calderon launched a military offensive on the country's powerful gangs, involving some 50,000 troops, in 2006.

Rights groups have underlined complaints of army abuses under the crackdown, which has been accompanied by a rise in violence.

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Tri-party Meetings on Labor Law changes off to good start

ORANJESTAD -- On Tuesday afternoon, the tri-party (three parties) group met once more with Minister of Labor, Otmar Oduber, to continue their discussions of the proposed labor law changes.

After the meeting Oduber indicated that the meeting was a continuation of previous encounters which began at the beginning of 2010. In those earlier meetings, employers, workers' representatives and the government met to discuss the proposed changes to 5 different labor laws.

A pivotal point stressed by the minister was that of the job security of employees. He made reference to the so-called 'on call' arrangement, the sesantia (severance pay) and the employment agencies which need to be regulated. In the same context, he stated that there must be responsible provisions made for employees when a company is taken over by another owner or person.

Oduber is pleased with the progression of the meeting and feels that there is consensus among the many employers

and employee representatives that there is the need for reform and for the modernization of our existing labor laws. Oduber continued to remark that there is the need for changes with respect to the protection that the government wants to implement for employees and employers so as to ensure that there will be job security and tranquility in the labor environment on Aruba.

This process is taking its due course in view of the many big changes, and in light of the fact that it is imperative that there be consensus among the three parties. He applauded the valuable input and high level of participation coming from the group as they discuss the various proposals. In Tuesday's meeting 6 points which were pending from the previous meeting were on the agenda, for which a consensus was reached on 4 of those points. The government is attempting to complete this process by the second quarter of the year and to present the revised laws to Parliament at that time.

Happy Birthday, Minister Sevinger

Yesterday, Happy Birthday was sang by his staff for Minister Oslin (Benny) Sevinger, wishing him all the best. Minister Otmar Oduber also decided to join the well wishers.

Afterwards everyone of Minister Sevinger's department enjoyed cake and refreshments.

Happy Birthday Minister Sevinger from all of us at The Morning News.



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Submit Petitions for Naturalization at Plaza Henny Eman

ORANJESTAD -- Last December some 1100 citizens submitted petitions for naturalization to the Office of the Governor of Aruba. That was also the final opportunity to submit a petition for naturalization with a certificate of the naturalization exams completed in Papiamento.

The submission of this many petitions went well, notwithstanding the large amount of petitions. A significant amount of persons who submitted petitions in December, have yet to submit additional documents, such as translated original documents. Those who still must submit documents have six weeks after the original submission date to complete the process of document submission. All official documents must be submitted to the Governor's Office at the Plaza Henny Eman.

Each citizen who submitted a petition in December should have received a document detailing what exactly is required of them and what the deadline is for submitting any additional documentation. The moment one is convinced that he has all the required documentation he should arrange for an appointment either through the online appointment system or by calling tel.583-4443 so as to submit his information personally.

Additional information can be obtained at www.kabga.aw

Contrary to what occurred in December 2010, the Department of Counselor Affairs will collect all documentation and petitions from the Office of the Governor and not at Cas Di Cultura.

The next step in the process once a file is complete; will be

an evaluation of the request for naturalization. In many cases the Office of the Governor has to request information from DIMAS with respect to the history of the petitioner's residence status. Also, in each case research is conducted relevant to whether the petitioner has a penal record. Following this the Governor's Office will submit their counsel to the Department of Immigration and Naturalization in the Netherlands (IND). It is this institution (IND) which makes the final decision whether or not to grant the naturalization to the petitioner. The entire process can take up to one year to complete.

All petitions for naturalization submitted after January 1st, 2011 must be accompanied by a certificate showing that the naturalization exams were taken in both Papiamento and Dutch.

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Mazel Tov Aspyn with your Bar Mitzvah



The Beth Israel synagogue in Oranjestad was filled to capacity Thursday morning when Aspyn Cole Palatnick celebrated his Bar Mitzvah, beautifully conducted by our Rabbi Mario Gurcorch, a truly memorable service. The son of Laurel and Robert Palatnick of Cold Spring Harbor, New York was joined on the bema by his grandparents Dr. Richard and Francis Joseph of Muttontown, New York and Mr. and Mrs. Albert Palatnick of Jericho,

New York. Afterward, everyone enjoyed a wonderful brunch in the meeting room of the synagogue, prepared and served by Mathew's Restaurant.

The rest of the afternoon was spent enjoying the beautiful beach and ocean at the Playa Linda, where the families are time share owners for many years.

Aspyn's destination Bar Mitzvah, which was attended by approximately 60 guests,

included his many aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends, continued that evening under the palapa at the Hyatt Regency Hotel with cocktail hour, dinner and dancing under the stars. Other highlights of the evening were face painting, a special toast by Aspyn's younger brother Skyler, who also performed a duet of "Don't stop believing" with his cousin Lindsay Jill Breslauer of Woodmere, New York. Everyone got a monogrammed hat inscribed with "What happens in Aruba...stays in Aruba" commemorating the event. The evening concluded with a Bar Mitzvah candle lighting ceremony.

The next morning all the guests shared brunch together at the Hyatt, reminiscing about the day before, and the rest of the week was vacation time.

We look forward to seeing you all again next year!

by Diane Keijzer
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Very high levels of lead found close to chemical fire, farmers fed up

DORDRECHT, The Netherlands -- Dangerous concentrations of lead have been found in fields close to the the Meroeijik chemicals packaging company which went up in flames last week.

Chemistry professor Jacob said the amount of lead -- up to a thousand times the permitted level -- is 'extremely worrying'.

Officials have so far maintained there is no danger to human health from soot released in the blaze.

Nevertheless, on Tuesday Breda mayor Peter van der Velden said the plant may have broken its licencing conditions and could be liable.

Van der Velden was speaking on behalf of the public prosecution department and refused to answer any further questions.

A department spokesman said officials had carried out searches of the Chemie-Pack offices, and that revealed possible infringements of the licence. But he too refused to go into further details.

A spokesman for the company also refused to elaborate on the allegations.

Meanwhile, it also emerged on Tuesday that cancer-causing dioxins had been found in the soot which had fallen in a 10-mile radius of the blaze. But the concentrations 'were not unusual' in the winter, Dordrecht mayor Arno Brok was quoted as saying..

A high concentration of dioxin found in grass growing 3 km from the fire was being looked into, he said.

Nevertheless, previous advice not to eat winter vegetables and to keep children and livestock indoors remains in force, Brok said.

Meanwhile, farmers whose fields are close to the plant are becoming fed up with waiting to find out if they can sell their produce, the Telegraaf reports.

And the uncertainty is damaging the entire sector, as foreign confidence in traditional winter vegetables such as sprouts, leeks and curly kale takes a knock, said a spokesman for the fruit and vegetable marketing board.

Vegetables which have been harvested since the fire are being stored separately pending the outcome of tests.

Dutch immigration minister: deport failed asylum seekers sooner

THE HAGUE, The Netherlands - The Dutch government is cracking down on refugees who file repeated asylum requests as a way of staying in the country for years while their cases crawl through the courts, the immigration minister announced yesterday.

Gerd Leers said in a letter to Parliament that once asylum seekers have had a request rejected twice they can be sent to their home country to await the outcome of any appeal if their repeat application contains no new information.

At present, many failed asylum seekers file an appeal against the second rejection of their original request shortly before their scheduled deportation, sometimes just moments before they are to board an airplane. Under the proposed legislation, asylum seekers would no longer be allowed to await the outcome of their appeal in the Netherlands if no new facts or circumstances emerged.

The announcement marks the first significant tightening of Dutch asylum guidelines since Prime Minister Mark Rutte's conservative coalition took office last year. Once one



Dutch Minister of Immigration Gerd Leers

of the world's most welcoming nations for those fleeing persecution, the Netherlands has shifted to the right in recent years and made it harder for people to claim asylum.

Anti-Islam lawmaker Geert Wilders agreed to support Rutte's minority coalition in return for a pledge to slash immi-

gration.

According to figures from the Central Bureau of Statistics, 16,000 people applied for asylum in 2009 and all but 1,000 applied for the first time. European Union statistics said most asylum seekers arrive from conflict-torn nations such as Iraq and Somalia.

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Sci-Tech

Fujitsu unveils 'world's first' glasses-free 3D PC



A model displays Fujitsu's new desktop computer "FMV FH99 Esprimo"

TOKYO (AFP) – Japanese IT services giant Fujitsu on Wednesday unveiled what it calls the world's first desktop computer with a display that

enables users to see 3D images without needing special glasses.

The Esprimo FH99/CM desktop PC, included in Fu-

jitsu's new line-up of the FMV computer series, has its liquid crystal display covered by a conversion panel enabling viewers to see three dimensional images on the screen.

The company plans to launch the 3D PC on February 25 in Japan, eyeing later overseas launches.

Fujitsu has already launched 3D desktop computers that require viewers to wear special glasses.

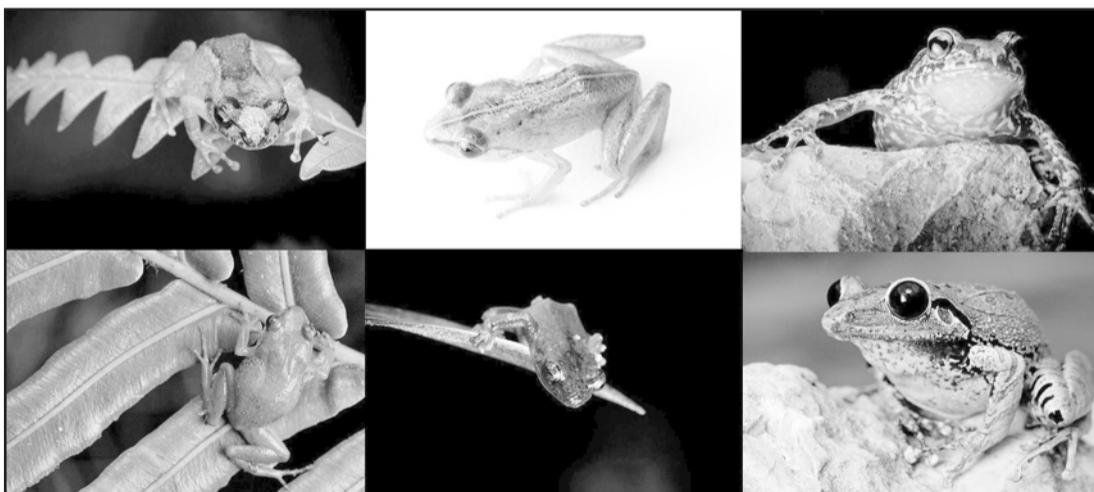
"Without having to wear glasses, you can enjoy watching 3D images with others," said Fujitsu engineer Toshiro Ohbitsu. "You can share the excitement with family."

The computer enables users to record and watch television and edit images.

Last month, Toshiba launched in Japan what it calls the world's first television that allows viewers to see 3D images without special glasses, amid intensifying competition in the market as the technology gains momentum.

Many in the industry say 3D television demand is being held back by consumers' resistance to wearing glasses.

Six species of Haiti's 'lost frogs' are found



WASHINGTON (AFP) – Conservationists say they have found six rare frog species that are unique to the Caribbean nation of Haiti and have not been seen in about two decades.

The discovery, which came despite heavy deforestation and widespread damage from last year's deadly quake, was made during an expedition in October to search for frogs that are rarely seen and could be on the verge of extinction.

Among the unusual frogs

researchers found were a whistling frog named after composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and a "ventriloquist" frog that can throw its voice to send predators in the wrong direction.

They also found in the mountains of southwest Haiti a burrowing, black-eyed frog with orange hind legs and a speckled frog with dazzling sapphire eyes.

The team, led by Conservation International scientist Robin Moore and Blair Hedges of Pennsylvania State

University, embarked on the search in order to find the elusive La Selle Grass frog (*E. glanduliferoides*), unseen in over 25 years.

They didn't find that frog, but uncovered tantalizing glimpses of a handful of Haiti's other 48 native species of amphibians.

"We went in looking for one missing species and found a treasure trove of others," said Moore.

"That, to me, represents a welcome dose of resilience and hope for the people and wildlife of Haiti."



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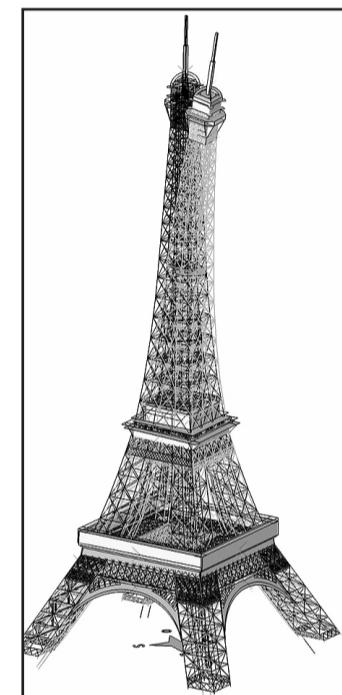
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Hi tech pays tribute to Eiffel Tower's origins



This hand out picture released by the Societe d'Exploitation de la Tour Eiffel (SETE), of a digital simulation of a 215 km/h wind impact on the structure of the Eiffel tower, with the top leaning forward 25 cm, with an amplitude multiplied by 20 to be visible.

PARIS (AFP) – Arguably the most widely recognised structure in the world, the Eiffel Tower was designed to stand for only 20 years -- and some predicted it would collapse long before then.

Even as it was being built for the 1889 Universal Exhibition, a professor of mathematics sagely calculated that when the tower was two-thirds complete, its legs would buckle and the whole thing would come tumbling down, crushing workers and houses alike.

Today, the Eiffel Tower is not only standing but remains in rude health, testifying to the soundness of Gustave Eiffel's design and the strength of "puddle iron," the hand-made wrought iron of the late 19th century, say engineers.

Specialists at the Technical Centre for Mechanical In-

dustries, or CETIM, have put together a high-powered computer model based on the 18,000 pieces that comprise the world's greatest iron edifice and the emblem of Paris.

On screen, the tower has been exposed to hurricane-force winds, lashing rain, extreme heat, cold and thick snow, and each time emerges unbowed, they say.

"We have applied the most demanding test standards currently set in Europe and have found that the tower is in excellent shape," said Stephane Roussin, a former French naval officer in charge of structural safety at Eiffel Tower Operating Co., or SETE.

"We have even doubled its weight to see what happens. The tower moves but is not destroyed."

SETE commissioned the model in 2008 to fine tune its maintenance programme -- to get a better idea of the 324-metre (1,063-feet) tower's weak and strong points as important projects are carried out.

In 2011, the tower will get its 19th coat of paint, and next year sees an overhaul of structures on its first floor. The tower itself weighs around 8,500 tonnes, to which some 3,000 tonnes (restaurants, lifts, TV antenna and so on) have been added.

Computer simulation has become standard practice for modern-built buildings, such as the Petronas towers in Kuala Lumpur and the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, and for bridges, such as the Millau viaduct in southwestern France.

But creating the model for the Eiffel Tower presented a technical challenge of a completely new kind.

One thing was that the realisation that its materials -- puddle iron (iron that is super-heated, beaten by hand and then folded over) and rivets -- perform quite differently from modern-day steel, concrete and bolts.

"We had to start from scratch," said Roussin.

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Health & Living

UK pledges £750mn for cancer strategy

LONDON, England (AFP) — A £750 million cancer strategy for Britain designed to drive up survival rates could save an extra 5,000 lives a year, ministers said.

New screening programmes will be introduced under the Department of Health (DoH) plans, which will see £450 million invested in increasing early diagnosis.

The money will be used to fund access to diagnostic tests from local GPs with over two million extra tests to be made available via primary care services over the next four years. The strategy also promises to increase access to radiotherapy treatment as well as focusing on prevention and healthy lifestyles.

Our ambition is simple, to deliver survival rates among the best in Europe and this strategy outlines how we will make our first steps towards this," said Health Secretary Andrew Lansley, unveiling the plans. "Our commitment is to save 5,000 extra lives a year

from 2014/15 and that is what we will be measuring our success against."

Around 298,000 new cases of cancer are diagnosed each year in the UK, according to the NHS. Cancer claims more than 150,000 lives a year in Britain, with one in four deaths caused by the disease.

Professor Mike Richards, the national clinical director for cancer, said survival rates in the UK "lag behind" other countries because too many people are diagnosed late.

"This is why our strategy focuses on earlier diagnosis which we will achieve through raising the public's awareness of the signs and symptoms of cancer and also providing better access to diagnostic tests," he said. "But improving outcomes for people with cancer isn't just about improving survival rates. It is also about improving patients' experience of care and the quality of life for cancer survivors and our strategy also sets out how that will be tackled."

DNA blood test cuts invasive testing for Down's syndrome

PARIS, France (AFP) — DNA in a pregnant woman's blood can reliably show whether her foetus has Down's syndrome, thus hugely reducing the need for invasive test procedures such as amniocentesis, research published.

Down's syndrome, a major developmental disorder also called trisomy 21, occurs in around one in every 800 live births.

No decline in US abortion rate

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The number of abortions in the United States stayed at about the same level in 2008 as three years earlier, leveling off after a long period of decline, a survey said.

Meanwhile the percentage of abortions that took place via drugs approved by the government in 2000 rose from 14 to 17 percent of all such procedures, according to data released by the Guttmacher Institute.

The total number of abortions in the United States in 2008 was 1.21 million, about the same as in 2005, when the institute issued its most recent

Pre-natal diagnosis mainly entails sampling fluid, drawn by a needle, from the amniotic sac enveloping the foetus. Another technique is called chorionic villus sampling, and entails taking a sample of placenta.

Both techniques, though, carry a roughly one-percent risk of miscarriage, which is why they are reserved for older

mothers-to-be and other women deemed at risk.

Researchers led by Dennis Lo, a professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, carried out the first large-scale investigation into new DNA technology which sequences telltale foetal molecules in maternal blood.

The test was carried out among 753 women who were all in the high-risk category.

A combination of pills containing mifepristone and misoprostol, known as early medication abortion, rose slightly compared to 2005.

The option is available in 59 percent of the nation's abortion clinics, the Guttmacher Institute said.

Meanwhile, abortion providers reported an increase in harassment: 89 percent compared to 82 percent in 2000.

Picketing was the most common form of harassment, reported by 55 percent of providers, followed by picketing combined with blocking patient access to facilities (21 percent), the institute said.

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Linda's Pancake and Pizza place, located at Palm Beach 6D, Noord (on the right side of Valero gas station) offers patrons the most delicious Dutch pancakes and pizza's with a Dutch twist.

Open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., and only five minutes away from the high-rise resorts, Linda's is the perfect eatery for the whole family.

Seeing the popularity of this quaint small eatery, THE MORNING NEWS decided it

is just mmm... good. The saté... out of this world!"

Besides the original plain pancake, Linda's specialty is pancakes with walnuts, Brie and honey; pancakes with banana and mango or a Dutch favorite: pancake with apple and bacon.

All their pizzas are made with Dutch Gouda cheese and different toppings making it richer in taste.

When it comes to saté, one has to say that the secret is in



Olgita, Ilhan and Iyanla enjoying a scrumptious meal

was time to find out just how good Linda's really is, by sending out a team of taste testers.

Olgita, joined by her two kids ordered a little of everything while the kids roamed around freely, enjoying the afternoon.

The meal started out with Linda's original plain – to die for – Dutch pancakes, followed by pizza, where instead of using mozzarella Linda has created a unique twist to the traditional Italian dish by using Dutch Gouda cheese. Adding a local favorite which could not stay off the table they also sampled the delicious saté (chicken, pork or beef on a wooden skewer) with peanut sauce (Indonesian influence on local food). For the finish the team (adults only) had one cup of Linda's delicious Espresso.

The team had this to say: "Superb! There are no words to describe just how delicious the pancakes are and the pizza

the sauce. Not everybody can make that perfect peanut sauce, but Linda, being an expert in the kitchen has cooked up one of the finest peanut sauces on the island, making this original Indonesian dish extra special.

If you want a specially prepared pancake or pizza, Linda is right there -- just for you -- in her kitchen.

"For those who are allergic to gluten I have a special pancake mix, gluten free," Linda stated to THE MORNING NEWS team.

Linda's Pancakes and Pizza also offers fried eggs and homemade soups.

"We also serve American coffee," Linda concluded.

With a complete menu, filled with delicious pancakes, pizzas and more, Linda's pancake and Pizza place is the perfect casual restaurant for all in the family.

For more information contact Linda's at 586-3378.

Take time to get acquainted with

NIKKY
B E A C H
A R U B A



There is a particularly lovely beach on Aruba with a gorgeous vista right near the airport, known always as Surfside; for some time now the building adjacent to it has gone through a string of owners seeking an appropriate identity for this special place, and it looks like it has finally found it with the opening of the Nikky Beach Club Aruba.

Our investigative team from THE MORNING NEWS went down to have a look at this latest venture, and we found just the kind of authentically tranquil, Caribbean ambiance vacationers seek when visiting

Aruba. New owner Hans and his GM Paul have completely renovated and redesigned the venue to fully showcase this charming location while providing a very reasonably priced menu and bar.

November is the month to get acquainted with Nikky Beach as they are offering an introductory dinner special of only \$15 for a three-course meal or a different Entrée de Jour each day of the week for only \$10. This is available from 5:00 to 9:30 p.m., so you can finish up an afternoon spent on the beach, catch a meal after a dive with the ad-

jacent SCUBA shop, or savor your supper along with one of the most spectacular locations to watch our amazing Aruban sunsets.

Jan and Paul have dubbed Sunday's at Nikky Beach "Rehab Day," when they provide a particularly pleasant ambiance with popular local and international DJ's from noon on and \$3 Mimosas all day long. During the traditional Happy Hour time slot, they feature live music with top local groups specializing in the soft sound of the islands.

Some extremely interesting items on the menu captured



our interest along with very moderate prices; aside from the November special you can expect an a la carte tab that will add to your enjoyment. Their chef offers an extensive fusion selection that reveals expertise in several notable cuisines; a nice variety that will please everyone's mood. For lunch and snacking you find a varied choice of classic salads, favorite local treats, pastas and gourmet sandwiches. Kitchen is open from 10:00 am. to 10:00 p.m. serving breakfast, lunch and dinner.

One last interesting tidbit: Paul explained they offer a customized Departure Day Package that allows vacationer to stow their luggage, enjoy all their amenities, choose a meal,

drinks or both and they will personally guarantee getting you to the airport in plenty of time for the flight. Changing rooms and showers let you swim and beach it until departure time and you can linger without rushing, as the airport is only 2 minutes away; no worries about fighting traffic or delays. "Why should you end your stay on a hurried and harried note?" asks Paul. "You can join us for the day and keep that relaxed island ambiance up to the last minute; it doesn't have to end at check out." The package requires reservations, which can be made by calling 582-0153 or contact them through their website: www.nickybeacharuba.com.

by Rosalie Klein

Brisbane prepares for deadly floods to peak



BRISBANE, Australia (AFP) – Australia's third-largest city Brisbane prepared for the peak of its worst floods in decades yesterday, with more than 30,000 homes under threat, as

the death toll rose to 13.

Thousands of people fled to higher ground and Brisbane's center was a "ghost town" with the river city of two million battened down for its worst

deluge in decades, while deadly floods inundated vast areas of Australia's northeast.

More than 50 suburbs and 2,100 roads were expected to be left under water as the Bris-

bane River bursts its banks and swamps the city centre, along with other areas.

The river was predicted to peak at around 4:00 am today at 5.2 meters (17 feet), down from an earlier forecast of 5.5 meters and lower than the lev-

els reached in the last major floods in 1974. The toll from the floods reached 13 after police confirmed the death of a 50-year-old man in Ipswich, a town upstream from Brisbane. AFP photos give an idea of the alarming situation.

COMICS

PICKLES



MOMMA



CALVIN and HOBBES



CROSSWORD



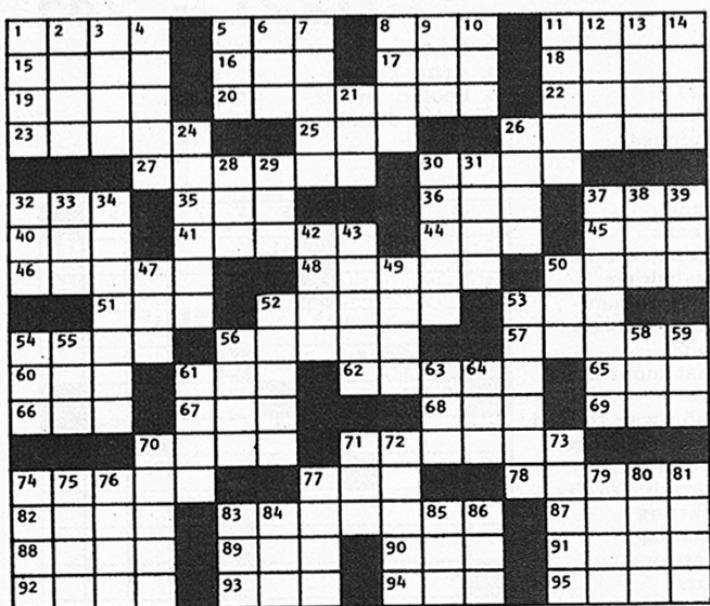
CROSSWORD

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ACROSS

- Mr. Hart, author of the autobiography "Act One"
- Bridge decision
- How some like it
- Ford's running-mate
- Give forth
- Thirst quencher
- Before
- Region
- Ocean's movement
- Hung loosely
- Cures leather
- Precipitous
- Petty bribe
- On edge
- Endured
- Julia ____ Howe
- Side of a triangle

- Part of a Parisian address
- Live and breathe
- Cud chewer
- Devoured
- Some canines
- ____ to be tied
- Color
- Squander
- Traveled here and there
- "____ Is the Hunter"
- Bushy clump
- Coin of Yugoslavia
- Generation ____
- Daze
- Desert beast
- Caper
- Ventilate
- Before bell or stool
- Evil spirit
- Historical period



- English river
- Lifetime
- Do sums
- Thomas Jefferson's hair color
- Altered the facts
- Eudora Welty's "The Heart"
- Small food fish
- Nothing
- Coarse files
- Capital of Peru
- Highway menace
- Man who built with gopher wood
- Styptic
- Old card game
- Topsy's friend
- "I Whistle a Happy ____"
- Arizona town
- Longing
- Twilled fabric
- Luge

- National League team
- Leave out
- Flank

- Material for drums popular in Trinidad
- Evil
- Actress Lupino
- Dimwitted
- Beatles film
- Crude metal
- Senator Kennedy
- Passe
- Algerian seaport
- Cariou and Deighton
- Facility
- Word on a coin
- Went different ways
- Waste allowance
- "A Boy Named ____"
- After ees
- Thin, crisp cooky
- Dry
- ____ and order
- Greek letter
- Expressive action
- Book division
- Umpire's call
- Small
- Edging
- Sharpened a razor
- Unit of weight
- Farewell: Latin
- Loyal supporter
- Ventured
- Male goose
- Downcast
- Cravat
- Batting-practice structure
- Anger
- Bounder
- Worm, perhaps
- Isle of ____
- Peculiar
- South American beast of burden
- Pizza ____
- Senior
- Complains wildly
- Bridge coup
- 5,280 feet
- Large Australian birds
- Gaseous element
- Actor-singer David
- Window segment
- Lean-to
- Cunning
- "The Pit and the Pendulum" author
- Mother of mankind
- Seance sound

SOLUTION

6	5	1	8	3	9	4	7
8	2	3	4	6	7	1	9
9	7	4	5	1	2	6	8
5	3	9	2	8	1	7	6
2	1	6	7	9	4	5	3
7	4	8	3	5	6	9	2
3	6	5	7	1	2	3	8
4	9	7	6	8	5	6	4

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9
A number is Never repeated in a row or column.
In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9

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Sudoku

8				7	5	3		9
4	9	7				3		
3							1	7
5	3		2	8			7	
9	7							3
							1	9

6	5	1	8	3	9	4	7
8	2	3	4	6	7	1	9
9	7	4	5	1	2	6	8
5	3	9	2	8	1	7	6
2	1	6	7	9	4	5	3
7	4	8	3	5	6	9	2
3	6	5	7	1	2	3	8
4	9	7	6	8	5	6	4

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Finance

Oil price hits two-year high



LONDON, England (AFP) — The price of oil struck a two-year peak above 98 dollars per barrel here as a trans-Alaskan pipeline, which carries 12 percent of US production, remained shut following a leak.

Traders were meanwhile awaiting publication of official weekly crude inventory data for the United States -- which is the world's biggest oil consuming nation.

Brent North Sea crude for delivery in February reached 98.46 dollars a barrel in early London trade, which was the highest level since October 1, 2008.

Profit-taking set in approaching midday, causing it to stand at 97.59 dollars, down two cents compared with this week's closing level.

New York's main contract, light sweet crude for February, dipped four cents to 91.07 dollars per barrel.

"There are quite a few good reasons that could explain and verify the current high oil prices," said Myrto Sokou, an analyst for the Sueden brokerage in London.

As well as the Alaskan pipeline shutdown, "forecasts about heavy winter conditions in the US northeast as well as strong equity markets could provide further support to crude... while it might be fairly soon that we can see the oil prices back to the \$100 level," she added.

The 800-mile (1,300-kilometre) pipeline delivers between 630,000 and 650,000 barrels a day of crude produced in the Arctic region to Valdez port in southern Alaska, from where it is delivered to the US mainland.

"There is some uncertainty surrounding the pipeline leak in Alaska," said analyst Matt Smith of Summit Energy.

"There has not been any clarity about when it would be resolved."

Smith said that US oil supplies were generally strong, but that the lack of information on how long the pipeline will remain closed nevertheless impacted prices.

"Until we have more clarity around that, there is going to be a premium in prices," he added.



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Easy Way To Innovate In Your Business

In a group I belong to, someone asked me to tell them how they could easily innovate in their business.

I thought I'd share my answer here because I feel it would help you.

If you have been reading my newsletters and blogs for a while, you'll probably recognize these two answers...

I said I could give them two straightforward ways to go about it. One way is to find out from their customers why they do business with you. The other is to find out why they buy the products that they buy.

When you get the answers

to those questions, you'll be able to innovate around them.

For instance, here is an example that was reported in the MIT Sloan Management Review about a fast-food restaurant...

The restaurant discovered that a large number of its customers were buying its milkshakes to drink early in the morning. What they found out was that these customers were buying the shakes as a filling food to drink "while driving on a long boring morning commute".

By understanding that the customers were looking for easily consumable food to

keep them company on a long, boring commute, the restaurant could then start to innovate around that desire and need.

When you know the "why", you can start coming up with the "how".

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by Ken Varga

Prague cafe owner scraps price list, boosts business



Ondrej Lebowski, 42, owner of Lebowski's cafe and a fan of the "Big Lebowski" movie, poses in his cafe bar in Prague where customers can choose how much they want to pay.

PRAGUE, The Czech Republic, (AFP) — A cafe owner in the Czech capital Prague has devised an unconventional, but apparently successful, scheme to drum up business: scrapping the price list.

"I had no customers and couldn't attract new ones, so I got this idea. The place is mostly full these days," 42-year-old Ondrej Lebowski told AFP.

Now clients at his Big Lebowski bar are free to set their own price for drinks, food, and even some of the memorabilia inside including film posters, books, toys and chess boxes.

Lebowski launched his innovative bid to attract more custom last August. Five

months on, curious customers are flocking to the cafe which would otherwise have gone bust.

"Customers try to arrive at the correct price, some give more, some give less," with most people doing their best to offer a fair amount rather than drinking and eating for free, Lebowski explained.

The cosy cafe includes a tiny bar on the ground floor, a steep staircase and two first-floor rooms, one painted red, the other one green.

"I come here once a week. It's great, amazing. But you feel inclined to pay regular prices just because it's a cool place," says Ankat, a young American studying in Prague.

"I usually pay what I usually pay in a normal place,

around 20 koruna (80 euro cents or a dollar) for a beer," he added.

The cafe, open on workday evenings, mirrors Lebowski's passion for movies, particularly The Big Lebowski.

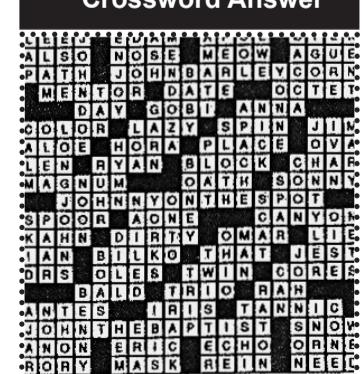
Ondrej named both himself and the venue after the quirky 1998 box-office hit.

"I changed my name when I found a new partner whose first name is the same as that of my ex-wife," explained the towering figure with a broad smile.

Also inspired by the movie, the Big Lebowski bar offers a tasty White Russian cocktail made of vodka, coffee liqueur and milk -- for no fixed price.

Sipping the creamy drink on the rocks, Aurora, an American college student, praised both the taste and the price she chose to pay for the tipple. "It's good," she nods, before adding: "I paid 80 koruna for two."

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer



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Blackburn centenarian reveals secret of long life

BLACKURN, Great Britain -- Alice Chadwick says the secret to a long life is a dry martini every day before lunch.

Mrs Chadwick who has just celebrated her 100th birthday said the cocktail, sometimes with a little gin, had kept her life long and healthy.

The Revidge resident celebrated her birthday with

dozens of friends and family at the Blackburn Golf Club on January 6.

Mrs Chadwick who joined the club in 1944, with her husband John, played until she was 90. She said: "I have been very active all my life and played a lot of golf but I do think the dry martini once a day has definitely contributed.

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These fabulous loft apartments are more spacious, with the sleeping area upstairs on



the loft. All apartments are completely furnished with cable TV. The open kitchen is very spacious and equipped with stove top, refrigerator, toaster/oven and coffee maker (microwave optional). The apartments are air-conditioned, with daily maid service, private parking and a mini market.

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Quality Apartments is situated at the Schotlandstraat 70 in Oranjestad. For reservations or information readers may call at tel: (297)-582-0697 or (297)-583-7484, Fax: (297)-583-5203. Office hours are Monday thru Friday: 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., on Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

E-mail: quality@setarnet.aw, Website: <http://arubaqualityapartments.com>

Prince Harry to join North Pole trek

Prince Harry is to join four wounded British Army veterans when they attempt to ski to the North Pole in April.

The team will embark on a four-week, 200 mile (320km) trek from Siberia across the polar ice cap in aid of the charity Walking with the Wounded.

The prince, will be exposed to the same privations and dangers as the rest of the group including the risk of falling into freezing water, possible attack from polar bears and storms.

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Millions take to floor in 'Just Dance' videogame



SAN FRANCISCO (AFP) — Ubisoft announced that it had sold more than five million copies of the latest version of a "Just Dance" video game tailored for play on Nintendo's motion-sensing Wii consoles.

"Just Dance 2," which gets players off couches and moving to music, was released in October as the third installment in a videogame franchise that has sold a total of about 10 million units, according to Ubisoft.

"The 'Just Dance' franchise has revitalized the video game music category with consumers worldwide joining the dance movement," said Ubisoft North America senior vice president of sales and marketing Tony Key.

"The outstanding performance of 'Just Dance 2' this holiday solidifies the brand as a pop culture phenomenon."

"Just Dance 2" challenges players to mirror choreographed moves set to more than 40 songs from an array of genres including funk, rock, and pop.

"We think the dance category could be huge," Key said in an interview with AFP. "Every room you put 'Just Dance' in catches fire at a party. People love to dance."

As many as four people can play at a time, with the number doubling to eight in a dance "battle mode." The game even

has a social networking page at facebook.com/justdancegame "liked" by more than 336,000 people. "The strong performance of 'Just Dance 2' is a perfect example of the potential that can be achieved by an independent publisher like Ubisoft in delivering irresistible content for the Wii system," said Nintendo of America President Reggie Fils-Aime.

Ubisoft has been a longtime believer in motion controls for videogames and the potential for 3-D cameras to immerse players in the on-screen action.

The French videogame titan scored another dance game victory with the release late last year of "Michael Jackson: The Experience" title for play on Wii consoles. The game combines late king of pop's music with his renowned dance moves, calling on players to learn and emulate the King of Pop's techniques.

Players are also able to sing along to Jackson songs including "Billie Jean" and "Beat It," and have their vocal performances rated by the game.

"Neither 'Just Dance 2' nor 'Michael Jackson: The Experience' discriminate," Key said.

"Both games combine great music, fun, competition and social interaction into one complete package that's easy for everyone in the household to enjoy."

Director shoots first major movie solely with iPhone



encounter between a fisherman and a female shaman (medium), for fun.

"New technology always offers wonders and useful features. Testing them is part of the amusement," he told Yonhap news agency in an interview after this week's premiere.

But the director, best known internationally for "Oldboy" and "Thirst" which each

won Cannes festival prizes, discovered unexpected benefits.

"It was a new experience compared with making a meticulously planned movie. Even a casual and spontaneous shot delivered a surprise," he said.

"It felt like there were more choices."

The scenes were shot simultaneously with two iPhones from different angles, but staffers also contributed

with recordings on their own iPhones.

"Some of them had an unexpectedly interesting angle," said Park Chan-Wook, describing the process as more democratic since everyone with a smartphone took part.

PROOne, the agency representing Park Chan-Wook, claimed the iPhone movie would be the first ever to be shown in cinemas.

Park Chan-Wook, however, said the medium would not outweigh the message.

"Making a film with smartphones might generate more interest at the moment. But as time goes by, stories and actors on screen will be seen as more important," he told Yonhap.

KT Corp, sole local agent for the iPhone which has sold 1.8 million units in South Korea since November 2009, partially funded the film.

The movie, co-directed by Park and his brother Park Chan-Kyong, will be shown in 10 cinemas nationwide from January 27 for four days.

Bond is back: 007 film revived after MGM crisis

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Filming on the latest James Bond movie will start later this year for release in November 2012, its producers said after debt-ridden studio giant MGM was saved from financial oblivion.

The project, starring Daniel Craig as 007, was put on ice last April after Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer was offered for sale to resolve its debt problems and stave off bankruptcy.

But the legendary studio, with a catalogue that includes the Bond franchise as well as the "Pink Panther" and "Rocky" series, announced a debt-restructuring rescue deal late last year, paving the way for Bond's return.

With the working title of Bond 23 -- the 23rd installment in the mega-grossing franchise formerly embodied by stars such as Sean Connery and Roger Moore -- the new movie will be directed by British filmmaker Sam Mendes.

The film "will commence production in late 2011 for a worldwide release on November 9, 2012," said Michael Wilson and Barbara Broccoli of EON Productions and Gary Barber and Roger Birnbaum of MGM in a statement.



Daniel Craig as James Bond in the film Casino Royale

"Daniel Craig will be returning as the legendary British secret agent, with Sam Mendes directing a screenplay written by Neal Purvis, Robert Wade and John Logan," it added.

MGM -- famous for its trademark roaring lion logo -- announced in October that creditors had approved a reorganization plan with US firm Spyglass Entertainment.

Spyglass was favored over a rival offer from billionaire Carl Icahn, who reportedly owns about 800 million dollars of MGM's debt, to merge the studio with film producer Lionsgate in which he is the largest shareholder.

The studio has a 4,000-title strong back catalogue that also includes "The Wizard of Oz" and "Singin' in the Rain."

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Resurgent Federer threatens 'Rafa Slam'



(FILES) Nadal consoles Federer after beating him at 2009 Australian Open

MELBOURNE (AFP) - A resurgent Roger Federer stands between Rafael Nadal and the "Rafa Slam" at the Australian Open, where the Spaniard can become the first man in 42 years to hold all four Grand Slam titles at once.

Defending champion Federer, now 29, has struck an ominous vein of form, downing Nadal for the ATP World Tour Finals crown in November and winning this month's Qatar Open to go 10 matches unbeaten.

Nadal, the world number one, is battling back from a debilitating fever which saw him slump out in the Qatar semis and delay his arrival in Melbourne.

The timing is brutal for Nadal, 24, who knows he may have only one shot at uniting all four majors -- albeit not in the same year -- for the first time since Australian great Rod Laver completed his second Grand Slam in 1969.

"It's going to be the one chance I have in my life," he admitted.

Nadal was reigning Australian Open champion when he retired hurt from last year's quarter-finals, but he bounced back to win Roland Garros, Wimbledon and his first US Open, moving to nine Slam titles and closing on Federer's record haul.

Federer thrived in Nadal's absence to stretch his Grand Slam tally to 16 at Melbourne Park, and has found a new lease of life under Paul Annacone, the coach who guided Pete Sampras and Tim Henman.

The Swiss, left in floods of tears after losing the 2009 final to Nadal, lit the fuse for more fireworks in their fa-

mous rivalry by targeting a return to the number one spot.

"You have to have something special to become world number one. But I'm prepared for that," Federer said.

However, the enduring dominance of the top two, joint favourites here, only spells more problems for the chasing pack led by Serbia's Novak Djokovic -- the 2008 winner -- and Andy Murray, heavily beaten by Federer in last year's final.

"It's incredible," said Murray, the world number five, marvelling at Nadal's tilt at the "Rafa Slam".

"A lot of people are saying, 'Well, it's not all in the one calendar year.' But I don't really think that makes any difference. If you hold all four Slams at one time, it's an incredible achievement. Even three in a row is amazing."

"That's what all of us are competing against. He's one of the best players ever, if not the best, and he deserves to be number one in the world, and if he does win the Australian Open -- which I hope he doesn't -- then it would be incredible."

Murray's quest to break Britain's 75-year Grand Slam drought has been repeatedly blocked by the top pair, whose parade through the past 23 majors has been interrupted only by Djokovic and Argentina's Juan Martin del Potro.

However, Djokovic arrives on a high following Serbia's Davis Cup victory over France last month, after collecting titles in Beijing and Dubai to end his fourth year in a row as world number three.

"The last couple of months

I've been playing maybe my best tennis and definitely a title in the Davis Cup gave me a lot of confidence and a very short off season as well, but that's the way it is. I have to adjust," he said.

"I'm still working hard off the court, trying to work physically well."

Sweden's Robin Soderling won last week's Brisbane International to leap-frog Murray as world number four, underlining his danger-man status after wins over Nadal and Federer at the 2009 and 2010 French Opens.

"I am playing really well and what makes me really happy is that I've never really played well in Australia before," Soderling said.

American evergreen Andy Roddick reached the 2009 semis here and was a quarter-finalist last year, while dark horses include Tomas Berdych, Mikhail Youzhny and Fernando Verdasco.

I won't be following Leonardo, says

ROME (AFP) - AC Milan forward Pato says he won't be following the lead of Brazilian compatriot Leonardo and switching city colours any time in the future.

Leonardo ended a 13-year association with Milan as player, scout, technical director and coach at the end of last season when his one year spell as coach was terminated.

And he provoked consternation amongst die-hard Milan fans by taking over the reins at their arch rivals Inter Milan just six months later.

Some fans expressed their dissatisfaction with the move during Sunday's 4-4 draw at home to Udinese by displaying anti-Leonardo banners.

And although fellow striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic has made the same move in the opposite direction -- via Barcelona -- Pato vowed never to don the blue and black shirt of Inter.

"This is a job and (Leonardo) has made his choice and we all respect that decision," Pato told Italian Sky.

"Inter are still Inter, a strong team that won everything last year and has won many league titles in recent years.

"But I've already said we have to concentrate solely on our aims and I'm convinced that at the end we'll do well."

"And I repeat, I only want to win with this jersey which I will wear as long as the club wants me to."

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UEFA to create new European player prize - Platini

MADRID (AFP) - UEFA will create the equivalent of the Ballon d'Or award for European players which it will start giving out next season, the president of the European football governing body, Michel Platini, said in an interview published Wednesday.

"UEFA will give a special prize to the best player in Europe, following the spirit of the former Ballon d'Or given by France Football which has now merged with the FIFA prize for best world player," he told Spanish sports daily Mundo Deportivo.

The prize will be awarded in August at an annual ceremony in Monaco on the same day as the draw to select the fixtures for the Champions League, the newspaper said.

The prize jury will be made up of representatives from all the football federations that make up UEFA, sports journalists and coaches, it added.

The Ballon d'Or, set up in 1956 by French sports magazine France Football, is decided by a poll of world football journalists.

Originally only European players at European clubs were eligible but in 1995 a change in the rules allowed non-European players to be eligible for the award if they played for a European club.

For 2010 the Ballon d'Or was merged with FIFA's Player of the Year prize. The

newly-created FIFA Ballon D'Or was awarded on Monday to Barcelona's Argentine international Lionel Messi.

Messi, the winner of the Ballon d'Or in the previous year, held off his Barcelona team mates Andres Iniesta and Xavi, second and third respectively, sparking disappointment in Spain but Platini said the player deserved it.

"He is the best without any debate. But I would have preferred that it go to Xavi or Iniesta," said Platini, a former France captain who won the Ballon d'Or three times.

Buffon to make cup comeback

ROME (AFP) - Juventus 2006 World Cup winning goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon will make his first appearance of the season following a back problem against Catania in the Coppa Italia on Thursday, his club said Wednesday.

Buffon has been unavailable since suffering a herniated disc during the World Cup in South Africa in June.

But Italy's first choice number one is finally due to make his season bow according to assistant coach Francesco Conti.

Conti also insisted that the much-maligned Italian Cup would be taken very seriously in Turin this season.

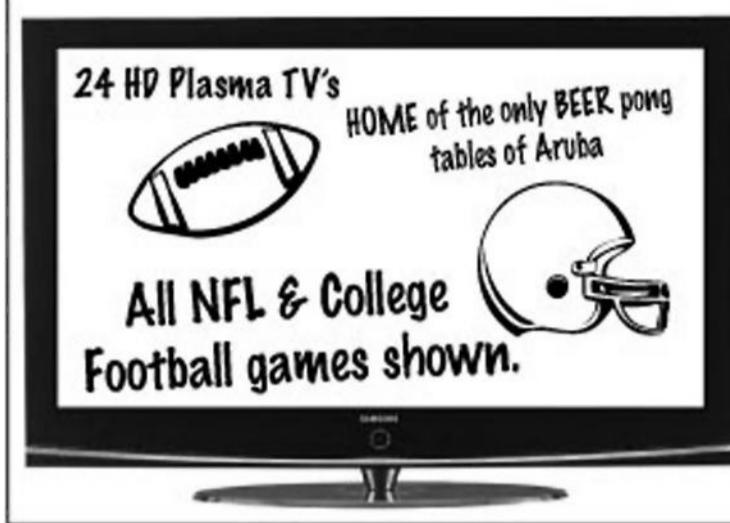
The team comes into the Catania game having conceded seven goals in losing their last two league games, scoring just once in reply.

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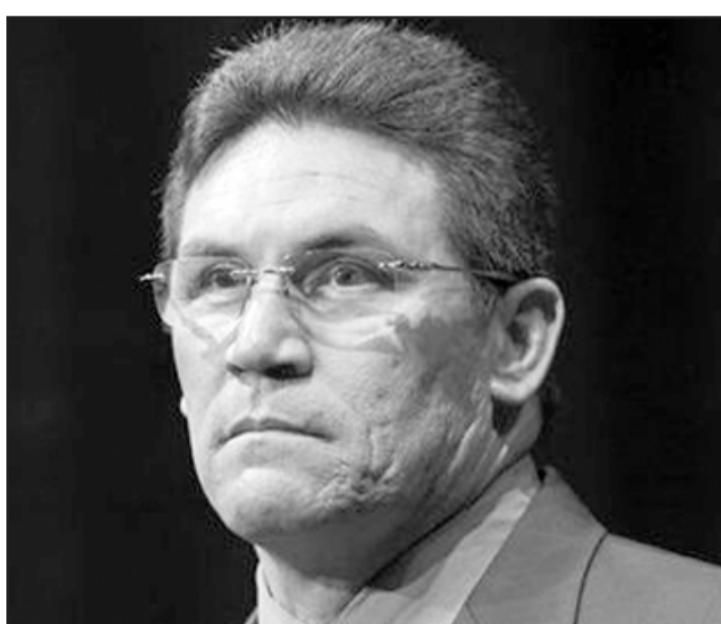
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Rivera becomes new coach of Panthers



CHARLOTTE (AFP) - The Carolina Panthers have hired San Diego defensive co-ordinator Ron Rivera as their new head coach, the National Football League club announced on Tuesday.

Rivera, who has no head coaching experience in the NFL, replaces John Fox, who was let go earlier this month after Carolina went 2-14 in his ninth season.

Rivera was the defensive co-ordinator in Chicago from 2004-06, helping the Bears reach the Super Bowl in his third season before the team cut him loose in a surprising move that freed him up for other offers.

The 49 year old Rivera has

the difficult task of turning around the NFL's worst team. He is the second Latino head coach in NFL history.

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Filipino bantamweight star Nonito Donaire (photo-R) says national pride will be on the line when he takes on Mexican champion Fernando Montiel (photo-L) in a world title fight February 19.

Donaire will be trying to take two titles off the 31-year-old Montiel who holds the WBC and WBO belts when they square off at the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino.

"Fernando Montiel is the

AL MVP Hamilton in hospital with pneumonia

DALLAS, Texas (AFP) - Major League Baseball's most valuable player Josh Hamilton of the Texas Rangers has been hospitalized with pneumonia.

The Rangers said Hamilton was diagnosed with the illness Monday and they expect him to be released by Wednesday.

Hamilton was named the

American League's MVP last season.

The club expects Hamilton to be able to resume conditioning and baseball activities in a few days.

Hamilton batted .359 with 32 home runs and 100 RBIs last year.

He has battled drugs and alcohol addictions in the past.

Chicago Blackhawks add to hockey all-star line-up

NEW YORK (AFP) - The reigning Stanley Cup champions Chicago Blackhawks and the Vancouver Canucks helped round out the rosters Tuesday for the National Hockey League's all-star game on January 30.

Chicago added forwards Patrick Kane (33 points) and Patrick Sharp to the game which already featured top stars Duncan Keith and captain Jonathan Toews.

Vancouver forward Ryan Kesler and Swedish twins Henrik (54 points) and Daniel Sedin (25 goals) were also included on Tuesday as part of the remaining 36 players chosen by



league officials.

Anaheim forward Corey Perry (21 goals), Columbus' Rick Nash (20 goals), Tampa Bay's Steven Stamkos (31 goals) and Washington's Alex

Ovechkin (44 points) were also added to the game in Raleigh, North Carolina.

One surprise pick was forward David Backes who had 17 goals and 48 points for St. Louis last season and has just 12 goals in 41 games this season.

This year the league has changed the format of the annual mid-season contest. Two team captains will each make alternating picks from the pool of 42 players to fill out their teams much like an outdoor game of shinny. Each team must have at least 12 forwards, six defences and three goalies.

Filipino pride on line Donaire seeks title



best fighter I have ever faced and certainly the toughest challenge of my career," Donaire said at a news conference Tuesday at a Los Angeles hotel. "It is going to be a battle of strength and will. I am leaving nothing to chance in my training and when the final bell rings the Philippines will have another mark in the victory column over Mexico."

Montiel (43-2-2, 33 KOs) is only the fourth Mexican boxer to capture world titles in three different divisions, next to his idol the legendary

Julio Caesar Chavez.

"It is a very important fight for me and a great opportunity to prove that I am one of the best fighters in the

world," Montiel said. "I expect a tough fight but I also expect to win."

Donaire (25-1, 17 KOs) of General Santos City, beat Ukrainian Wladimiro Sidorenko in his last fight to extend his win streak to 24 fights.

The 28-year-old former world flyweight champion, who is comfortable throwing punches with either hand, wobbled Sidorenko just 75 seconds into the fight with a powerful right and the stinging left hook combination.

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Clijsters too strong for Azarenka

SYDNEY (AFP) - Kim Clijsters stormed into the semi-finals of the Sydney International with a straight sets demolition of Victoria Azarenka on Wednesday.

The Belgian world number three reaffirmed her status as favourite for next week's Australian Open with five service breaks on the way to a 6-3, 6-2 win over the seventh-seeded Azarenka in 85 minutes.

Clijsters will face the winner of unseeded pair, Dominika Cibulkova of Slovakia and Russia's Alisa Kleybanova in Thursday's semi-finals.

China's Li Na will take on Serbian qualifier Bojana Jovanovski in the other semi, after Jovanovski beat Flavia Pennetta 6-4, 6-1 in their

quarter-final.

With no Serena Williams in Melbourne and the patchy early season form of the two top-ranked women, Caroline Wozniacki and Vera Zvonareva, Clijsters was in devastating form.

The Belgian mother controlled the match from the baseline in swirling winds with her deep groundstrokes putting Azarenka on the defensive.

Li was the first player into the semi-finals after a gruelling dogfight with Russia's Svetlana Kuznetsova.

The 11th-ranked Li wore down the two-time Grand Slam champion, 3-6, 7-6 (7/4), 6-3 in almost two and a half hours on a warm day to book her spot in the last four of the tournament.

Hewitt, Monfils, Davydenko win at Kooyong

MELBOURNE (AFP) - Lleyton Hewitt said he was feeling fresh ahead of his 15th Australian Open after a rain-interrupted 7-5, 4-6, 6-4 win over Mikhail Youzhny at the Kooyong Classic Wednesday.

With the flood tragedy unfolding away to the north in Queensland, poor weather was also affecting Melbourne.

Hewitt's match was delayed by rain for 90 minutes in the second set before the former world number one returned to court to earn a victory at the eight-man tune-up for the Open, which starts Monday.

The 29-year-old has never played in the Kooyong Classic, preferring ATP tournaments as warm-ups prior to the first major of the season.

"I knew I'd get three good matches here, it's a good field," he said. "You can't buy matches like the one I just had. This is how you get match tough and that's what you have to be for the Open.

"I feel I can compete with most guys now, I had hard weeks of training after my (elbow) injury in September. I'm fresh and feel pretty good. That's a good sign at age 29."

Frenchman Gael Monfils also began his season on a positive note with his third straight win over Spain's Fernando Verdasco to open the four-day event.

In the day's final match which finished in fading light, Russian Nikolay Davydenko defeated Wimbledon finalist Tomas Berdych 7-5, 3-6, 6-3, with Davydenko lining up a promotion round match Thursday with Hewitt.

Monfils, whose last competitive outing came as a losing Davis Cup finalist last month against Serbia, pulled back from the brink after

dropping the opening set to win 4-6, 7-6 (7/5), 6-4.

"It was good, it was the first match of the season, I'm pretty happy," said the 12th-ranked Monfils, who said his off-season preparation consisted of "a lot of running and some gym work" as he stayed away from tennis after a long 2010 campaign.

"It was a tough start to the match, but once I found my rhythm, I was moving well. I was the aggressor on the court."

Monfils has never lost to the ninth-ranked Verdasco, beating him in the Paris in-

door third round two months ago and at Monte Carlo on clay in 2008.

Verdasco won the Kooyong special event a year ago over France's Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, whose opener against Austrian Jurgen Melzer was put back to Thursday after the rain. Monfils plays the winner of that match.

Monfils, watched by his Australian coach Roger Rasheed, showed good early conditioning as he mounted a comeback in an encounter lasting 2hr 52min.



Main Events 2011

FRI, JAN 14. Carnaval Happy Hour Place: pending

SAT. JAN. 15 Youth Salsa Dance Contest Place: pending

SUN. JAN. 16 6:30 P.M. Aruba's Children -, Youth and Adult Prince and Pancho Election Place: Aruba Entertainment Center

WED. JAN 9 6 - 9 P.M. Sign-up happening Tumba Festival 41 Place: Balashi Garden

FRI. JAN. 21 Carnaval Happy Hour Place: pending

SAT. JAN 22 6:30 P.M. Aruba's Children and Youth Calypso & Roadmarch Contest 2011 Place : Joe Laveist Sportpark

SUN. JAN 23 6 - 10 P.M. Sign-up happening Calypso & Roadmarch Contest 2011 Place : Joe Laveist Sportpark



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